



# SCOTT WALKER

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Tom Evenson, (608) 267-7303

## **Governor Scott Walker Declares State of Emergency In Response to Propane Shortage and Severe Cold Weather**

**Madison** – Governor Scott Walker today declared a State of Emergency in response to the propane shortage that is impacting Wisconsin in advance of the extremely dangerous temperatures expected to move across the state in the week ahead. The declaration directs all state agencies to be on alert and to assist as needed.

“The health and safety of our citizens is our number one priority, and this declaration gives us the necessary resources to protect the residents of Wisconsin,” Governor Walker said. “Since last fall, we have taken action to help alleviate the impact the propane shortage is having on our state. I will do everything I can within my power to help our friends and loved ones relying on propane to heat their homes or businesses during this challenging situation.”

The supply shortage in the upper Midwest has caused delivery delays and reduced delivery amounts for propane customers in Wisconsin, as well as all Midwestern states. The propane shortage has been caused by:

- unusually cold winter temperatures
- a major pipeline supplying propane to Wisconsin, Minnesota and Iowa was temporarily closed for maintenance from November 28 – December 18
- a wet fall increased propane demand for grain drying

Governor Walker and his administration have taken numerous steps to help alleviate the effects the shortage is having on the 250,000 residents who use propane to heat their home or business including:

- Governor Walker has issued multiple Executive Orders since October 25, 2013, allowing propane transport drivers to log additional hours to transport more propane. Typically, a propane driver can drive 70 hours per week based upon Wisconsin and federal laws. Several state petroleum terminals have not been able to meet the demands of their customers and are currently on a propane rationing system. The increased demand and limited regional supplies of propane means drivers are working more hours per day to obtain propane, causing drivers to reach maximum weekly driving and on-duty limits more quickly than normal. Carriers continue to remain responsible for ensuring they operate safely.

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- On January 3, 2014, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation and the Department of Administration authorized a weight limit relief order for vehicles transporting energy in the state in order to increase the amount of propane carried in a single trip.
- At the request of Wisconsin and other Midwestern states, the U.S. Department of Transportation issued a Midwest regional declaration of emergency on January 19, 2014, extending state emergency declarations for purposes of exempting hours of service requirements for propane and fuel transporters; and
- [Governor Walker issued a public service announcement on January 23, 2014](#), providing Wisconsin citizens with information about the current propane shortage in Wisconsin and asking their help in looking out for residents who are being impacted.
- On January 24, 2014, Governor Walker directed the Department of Administration's Division of Energy Services to release \$1.5 million in additional Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) Crisis Benefit dollars to the 49 counties/tribes that have a high percentage of propane households.
- The Department of Administration's Division of Energy Services has contacted approximately 23,000 low-income propane customers recommending that they contact their propane vendor when their tank reaches 30% full to ensure they continue to have heating fuel and provided information on assistance available through the [Wisconsin Home Energy Assistance Program \(WHEAP\)](#).
- The Department of Administration's Division of Energy Services issued information to all of the local/partner contacts for [WHEAP](#) that outlines the benefits available to customers, including the availability of Crisis Benefit dollars to pay for lodging or temporary shelters.
- Wisconsin Emergency Management has contacted local emergency management directors to monitor warming sites and shelter availability.
- The [Keep Wisconsin Warm Fund \(KWFF\)](#) has agreed to temporarily allow an increase in their income limit for propane households from 60% of State Median Income (SMI) to 80% SMI, and will allow propane households to potentially receive an increased maximum benefit of \$600 and has temporarily adjusted their policy to allow propane households the ability to potentially receive two benefit payments in a year.

<b>60% of State Median Income Guidelines</b>		
Household Size	Monthly Income	Annual Income
1	\$2,058	\$24,692
2	\$2,691	\$32,290
3	\$3,324	\$39,887
4	\$3,957	\$47,485
5	\$4,590	\$55,083
6	\$5,223	\$62,680
7	\$5,342	\$64,105
8	\$5,461	\$65,529

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## What Citizens Can Do

1. **Call the non-emergency number of your local sheriff's department if you need the location of a local warming shelter or other local resources.** As always, call 911 for an emergency.
2. **Check on friends, neighbors, and loved ones to ensure everyone has a warm place to stay.**
3. **Call toll-free 1-866-HEATWIS (432-8947) for information about where you can purchase propane in your area, or to apply for assistance towards your propane heating bill.**

You can also visit [www.homeenergyplus.wi.gov](http://www.homeenergyplus.wi.gov) about where to apply for heating assistance through the WHEAP program. Your local agency will determine eligibility for heating benefits based upon your household income, size, and the home's heating costs. If you are eligible, the WHEAP program will make a payment directly to your fuel supplier towards the cost of your propane. These benefits are available through May 15, 2014. Your local agency will also determine if you are eligible for Crisis Benefits.

4. **If you go to a local warming shelter, turn off the water in your home and drain your pipes to ensure they pipes do not freeze in your absence.** If you are hesitant to use a shelter because you are afraid to leave a pet behind, please call your local warming shelter/human services agency as many warming shelters also offer pet shelter when an individual or family utilizes the shelter.
5. **Please donate to the Keep Wisconsin Warm Fund (KWWF) to help those impacted by the crisis.** Credit card donations accepted:
  - a. Online at [www.kwwf.org/donate](http://www.kwwf.org/donate)
  - b. By calling KWWF at 608-333-0809

A copy of Governor Walker's executive order is attached.

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